



## USALUMNEWS

### January 2014

Youth USG Alumni Delegates  
from 10 ASEAN Countries at  
the LEAD ASEAN SUMMIT

#### LEAD ASEAN SUMMIT Held in Manila



A total of 150 USG Alumni from ASEAN countries gathered in Manila from December 3-5, 2013 for the "Link, Engage, Activate, Develop (LEAD) ASEAN Youth Summit". The summit provided an opportunity for young ASEAN leaders to form a network to promote a stronger ASEAN identity and strengthen ties among youth leaders in the region. The 3-day summit featured interactive panel discussions, exposure trips, cultural exchange activities, and workshops that enabled the participants to learn from each other's experiences, gain exposure to experts in their fields of interest, and find avenues for collaboration and learning.

Also during the summit, President Barack Obama addressed the participants in a video message and announced the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI). YSEALI seeks to augment leadership development and networking in ASEAN; deepen engagement with young leaders across critical sectors; and strengthen people-to-people ties between the United States and young leaders across the region. This new initiative will expand and institutionalize extensive diplomatic and programmatic engagement throughout Southeast Asia aimed at empowering the next generation of leaders.

On the third day, Summit attendees proposed innovative projects to address challenges confronting their countries, communities, and region while building a framework to sustain the youth network in the years to come. The summit concluded with a "black and white" themed party at the Hard Rock Café. The delegates were treated to a night of sumptuous dinner, entertainment, dancing and messages on stage from country delegates thanking the Philippines for being a great host to a fun and memorable summit.

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

**ALUMNI REFLECTION**

**LITER OF LIGHT FOR YOLANDA SURVIVORS**

**AEIF 2013 WINNER LEADS PROJECT W.I.R.E.D IN MANILA**

**US ALUMNI JOINS TYPHOON YOLANDA RELIEF**

## Letter from the Editor

Happy New Year and welcome to the third edition of USAalumnews!

Our alumni wrapped up 2013 with lots of exciting events. Two highlights were the LEAD ASEAN Youth Summit in December that brought together 150 young alumni from ASEAN, and Secretary Kerry's visit to the Philippines where he had a chance to meet a beneficiary of Hubert H. Humphrey Alumnus Illac Diaz's Liter of Light project in Tacloban. Read on to learn more about alumni efforts to help survivors of Typhoon Yolanda, bring sports to young people in Mindanao, and assist people with disabilities to find employment.

Last year was an amazing year, filled with outstanding achievements by our alumni. We look forward to another year of working closely with you, and learning more about the great work you are doing to bring positive changes to your communities, country, and region!



**Jennifer Foltz**  
Assistant Cultural  
Affairs Officer

## State Alumni Community - Philippines Facebook page

Philippine International Exchange Alumni have their own Facebook page: State Alumni Community-Philippines! This page and [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov) serve as social media platforms for alumni to share news, updates, insights, and opportunities with the Philippine alumni community. If you haven't yet "liked" our page; please do so and connect, inspire, and empower!



[facebook.com/StateAlumniPhilippines](https://facebook.com/StateAlumniPhilippines)

## ALUMNI REFLECTION

By: Ayana Jamnia G. Maranda  
Philippine Representative, LEAD ASEAN Summit  
Philippine Youth Leadership Program (PYLP) Alumna

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan cut a swath of destruction across the central part of the Philippines. The resulting storm surge around the coastal towns of Eastern and Western Samar and Leyte led to grave loss of life and massive damage to private and public assets.

This elicited responses from various local and international organizations, which provided an unprecedented humanitarian assistance to the Philippines.

Governments from around the world have responded with generous support for the humanitarian relief efforts and early recovery initiatives. More than 60 countries, together with multilateral organizations (including the Asian Development Bank, European Union, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, United Nations, and the World Bank) have provided and continue to provide vital financial, material, and logistical support. As of December 12th, foreign aid totaling more than P23 billion has been pledged, of which approximately P0.6 billion has so far been received[1]

Now that the ASEAN-LEAD Summit has ended, and with the recent disaster that has spate my country, I have grown to fully appreciate the expression "no man is an island." Cooperation within and outside one's country is indeed a cornerstone of lasting and sustainable path towards progress.

The establishment of a network of young leaders across Southeast Asia is a breakthrough in fostering stronger ties through the collaboration of ideas. Having young people learn about the values of community and participation, as well as the dual concepts of rights and responsibilities, was greatly emphasized during the Summit. The 2012 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee from Myanmar, Lahpai Seng Raw, explained in length on how the Metta Development Foundation moved mountains by engaging stakeholders to address the displacement and crisis brought about by the fighting between the Kachin rebels and government forces. She highlighted that by building trust among all stakeholders through joint efforts in comprehensive and participative interventions, a peaceful future can be achieved.

One can draw parallels from Ms. Raw's story vis-à-vis the Muslim armed struggle in Mindanao, Philippines. It is stories like these that young Mindanaoans, including myself, can draw inspiration from on how to actively lead and engage our fellow youth in addressing this challenge.

The Summit focused on four pillars - economic development, the environment, education and awareness, and human development. Each session catapulted discussions among participants that that will lead to the development of tangible frameworks for progress within one's country and hopefully in the greater ASEAN community.

This is especially timely since one of the Philippine advocacies, as stated in the Chairman's speech during the 23rd ASEAN- JAPAN Commemorative Summit, is the strong support for initiatives that instill a sense of community, including the establishment of an ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program and a regional youth volunteer initiative. Surely, a lot of young participants coming from the LEAD Summit would actively participate should the program be finally established.

Notwithstanding the insights I gained from the workshops and plenary sessions, it was the newfound friendships with other young people from ASEAN Countries that left a lasting impression. I realized that "I am not alone" in wanting to contribute something better for my country, despite my inexperienced youth. I am honored to have been part of the Summit and will continually live everyday hinging on President Obama's message that "Your generation is to define the Asia Pacific."

## AEIF 2013 Winner leads Project W.I.R.E.D in Manila

International Visitor Leadership Program alumnus Rex Bernardo implemented the first phase of Project W.I.R.E.D (Work Innovation through Resource Enabled Development) on October 22, 2013 at the De La Salle College of St. Benilde-Manila.

Project W.I.R.E.D is one of the Philippines' winning proposals from the Department of State's 2013 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF). The project aims to provide ICT skills to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), utilizing an online and face to face training approach as an alternative learning methodology. Thirty (30) participants from Luzon and the National Capital Region were in attendance for a one-day orientation on Work-from-Home and Online Freelancing Opportunities for PWDs.



U.S. Embassy- Manila Cultural Affairs Officer, Kristin Kneedler and National Council for Disabilities Affairs (NCDA) Acting Executive Director Carmen Zubiaga delivered remarks to launch the project. Project W.I.R.E.D will also be holding workshops in Visayas and Mindanao.

For more information, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/ProjectWIRED>.

## Project HOPE through Sports Held in Marawi City



Fullbright alumnus Henry Daut led a 2-day activity entitled, "Project HOPE through Sports" at the Mindanao State University - Marawi on November 9, 2013.

This program, made possible through a U.S. Embassy small grant, is an alternative psychological intervention program for children/youth affected by natural calamities and armed conflicts in Mindanao through sports, arts and physical activities. Members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and faculty and students from MSU - Marawi volunteered to assist in leading the activities. Five Hundred (500) participants ages 6-15 joined in the activities such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, flag football, dance/theater and sepak takraw. The activity ended with a tree planting activity to highlight the importance of preserving the environment at a relocation village with seedlings donated by MSU's College of Forestry.

## US Alumni Join Typhoon Yolanda Relief



Several alumni of the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study program participated in the relief efforts to help those affected by Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda.

YES alumni Rochelle Porras and Ershad Ibba (YES 04), together with their own organization “Tulong Kabataan” organized a relief drive to gather and sort/pack goods and donations for the typhoon victim. Amelah Odoya, Norhaine Sultan (YES 08), Janica Katricia Diamalon, Al-hakeem Canape, Seanekate Amilbahar, Marissa Matias, and Menchie Lumbos (YES 10) in General Santos City partnered with ABS-CBN on a relief operation for the repacking of relief goods to from their community to be distributed to Leyte City.

Meanwhile, YES Alumni from Davao City Jorjani Sinsuat, Abdul Jabbar Yusop, Snow Reeham Halud (YES 11), Edres Samama (YES 08),

Ashrebai Sinarimbo (YES 09) organized a concert for a cause dubbed as “Bangon Leyte” and sold t-shirts with all proceeds of both events going to the typhoon victims.

YES alumni Datu Moden Talandig, Adzhar Madjid (YES 09), and Arnalyn Dulla (YES 11), in partnership with Xavier University and SIRADJ Muslim Organization set-up a drop center for relief goods and in-kind donations in Cagayan de Oro City to benefit typhoon victims.



A “Peso Campaign”, on the other hand, was organized by YES alumni Abdul Rahman Alongan (YES 08), Alaissa Macog, Mohammad Aizam Askali (YES 10), Bolkiah Mamadsual, Norol-am Binatara (YES 09) in coordination with AFS Cotabato chapter at Cotabato City State Polytechnic College (CCSPC).

Tiffany Chan (YES 04), a Tacloban resident, became instrumental in sharing information on relief operations and updates on missing persons through her blog: <http://tiffanycwrites.wordpress.com>

Guill Marc Mariano (YES 07), now based in Bangkok, Thailand, also helped organize a fund raising event in Bangkok with the help of Filipino community.

Lastly, LEAD ASEAN Youth Summit delegates from Laos donated Nine Million Kips (P49, 331) to help the survivors. The group of USG Alumni did a donation drive in their country for two weeks; with most of their funds derived from selling cookies and money dropped in their donation boxes.

## Liter of Light for Yolanda Survivors



In an effort to help typhoon survivors and encourage alumni community service activities, U.S. Embassy Manila partnered with Hubert H. Humphrey Alumnus Illac Diaz on December 13-14, 2013 for a training workshop to assemble solar lights for Yolanda survivors in Tacloban City. In partnership with Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the event brought together more than 25 alumni volunteers from U.S. Government exchange programs, including participants from the LEAD ASEAN Youth Summit, TESDA staff and students and persons with disabilities who were trained at a workshop earlier in the year. U.S. Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg also participated in making the solar lights and commended the efforts of the volunteers.

The micro-solar lights, both lamp posts and small bottle lights, produced in the training were later sent to Tacloban for distribution. During Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to the city on December 18, Secretary Kerry met Illac and the Monsanto family, one of the recipients of the solar lights. Apolino, the head of the family, proudly displayed his own bottle of light to Secretary Kerry, expressed his gratitude and told the Secretary how the micro-solar light provided much-needed help to his family as they recover from the devastating typhoon. Illac also explained to the Secretary how the micro-solar lights work. In his remarks, Secretary Kerry commended Mr. Diaz's work, stating that he turned soda bottles into lanterns that served not only as the only source of light for Tacloban immediately after the typhoon, but as an important aid for people to continue with their lives.





Eleven representatives of different U.S. exchange alumni associations with East Asia and the Pacific Alumni Coordinator Kennon Jones. The group exchanged ideas on the programs they are engaged in and information on how the Department of State can continue to support their alumni initiatives.



Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer Elizabeth Meza met with alumni of U.S. government exchange programs in Marawi City for a fun discussion on the alumni's experiences in studying in the United States.

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K-L YES and PYLP Alumni in Zamboanga City with U.S. Embassy Political Officers Eric Kneedler and Nate Young after sharing their experiences on helping their communities after studying in the U.S..

## CONGRATULATIONS!

- International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) Alumna Maria irene Aserios for winning the 2013 Best Lifestyle Blog and 2013 Mindanao Blogger of the Year at the first Mindanao Blog Awards!

- Hubert H. Humphrey Alumnus Ilac Diaz for winning the Sustainia Community Award in Copenhagen, Denmark for his "Liter of Light" (Isng Litrong Liwanag).

Feel free to read the article featured at the Humphrey Fellowship website: <https://www.humphreyfellowship.org/news/humphrey-alumnus-wins-sustainia-community-award>.

And video from <http://vimeo.com/80069227>.



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Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg : [@AmbGoldberg](https://twitter.com/AmbGoldberg)

DCM Brian L. Goldbeck : [@USEmbManilaNo2](https://twitter.com/USEmbManilaNo2)

### Links to grants:

- <https://alumni.state.gov/member-resources/grant-opportunities>

### Links to job opportunities:

- [http://manila.usembassy.gov/employment\\_opps.html](http://manila.usembassy.gov/employment_opps.html)
- <https://alumni.state.gov/member-resources/job-opportunities>

**If you have an upcoming Alumni Event or interesting stories and experiences to share, please contact:**

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